

WITH LOVE, WHEREVER YOU ARE



A NOVEL

With Love,

WHEREVER YOU ARE

DANDI DALEY MACKALL

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With Love, Wherever You Are

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Helen

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

DEC. 7, 1941

What now? Helen Eberhart elbowed her way through the mass of student nurses crowding the hospital bulletin board. If *she* were in charge, she would come up with a better system for assigning duties and shifts. Couldn't this top-notch hospital afford more than one bulletin board, at the very least? Student nurses had to check several times a day, and heaven help the would-be nurse who missed one duty, one time change, one announcement.

She scanned the list until she got to her name. "Swell," she muttered. Extra duties *and* extra hours. When was she supposed to study for her anatomy test?

She turned and stood on tiptoes to relay the bad news to her roommate. At five feet eight, half a foot taller than Helen, Lucille was easy to spot. "Lucille! Get coffee! We've both pulled extra—"

"Shhh! Shush, everybody!"

Helen wasn't sure who'd said it, but the whole group quieted to a murmur. The PA system crackled and screeched—another thing she'd see to if she ever got to run things. Two white-jacketed interns strutting up the hall stopped and stared at the metal loudspeaker as if waiting for God—or the chief of staff—to issue at least ten commandments.

True, they didn't get many announcements, but Helen didn't have time to gawk at a disembodied voice. "Coming through!"

"Quiet!" Nurse Benchley frowned at her.

Helen didn't appreciate being shut down. If Benchley weren't one of her instructors, she wouldn't get away with it either.

“ . . . Hawaii from the air.”

She'd missed the announcement, but she caught enough to know this wasn't a page from the chief of staff. The hospital was relaying a radio broadcast.

“Just a moment. . . . I'll repeat that.”

The hallway froze, interns transformed into wax statues with identical stunned expressions. Old Dr. Laban, his glasses crooked as always, dropped his arms to his sides like broken twigs snapping from a tree trunk. His clipboard dangled from one hand. Everybody seemed to move farther away from Helen, although nobody had budged. Sound froze too, leaving an eerie silence decibels below hospital-zone quiet.

Only the voice from the loudspeaker filled the hall, filled the hospital, filled the world:

“President Roosevelt says the Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii from the air. . . .”

Helen couldn't hear any more because suddenly the silence became a buzz. She thought the buzz must be in her head, growing louder and louder, like locusts in Cissna Park on a summer's night.

Then the space around her exploded in cries and questions fired at random, aimed at nobody. The chaos was so rampant that Helen would have believed it if someone told her a bomb had struck the hospital.

“Did they say bombs? Actual bombs dropped on us?”

“I can’t believe it!”

“Dear God in Heaven!”

“Where’s Pearl Harbor?”

“They’ll come here next. You’ll see. What do we do now?”

“Chicago will be a target for sure.”

“I want to go home!”

“Jimmy’s in the July draft. What if they send him over there?”

“So we’re at war? I mean officially at war?”

“I always thought it would be the Germans. Why Japan?”

The questions bounced off Helen. She wouldn’t let them in. Not yet. Not when she was so close to becoming a real nurse. War would ruin everything. Besides, as long as she could remember, there had been wars somewhere, or people talking about them.

Her war had been to make a tin of corn bread stretch for a family of thirteen during the worst days of the Depression. Her battles had been standing up to big brothers who weren’t so sure she belonged in their family and to a father who said her place was on the farm, not learning how to take care of sick strangers in Chicago.

“Helen? Did you hear me?” Lucille shouted above the cacophony of voices that echoed in the halls. She elbowed her way to Helen’s side. “Come on. They’re showing us where the bomb shelters are.”

The crowd of nurses and doctors and patients flowed like floodwaters down the hall toward the stairwell. Lucille got pulled in with them, but not Helen. She shoved in the opposite direction, a lone fish swimming upstream.

“Hey! Where are you going, Eberhart?” Lucille shouted after her.

“Where do you think?” Helen called back. “I’ve got extra duty. I’ll be in room 301 if you need me!”

“Helen!”

“Nurse? This way.” An intern grabbed her arm and tried to spin her around and take her with him.

She jerked her arm away. Nothing was going to stop her. Not him. Not the Japanese. Not Roosevelt. Not the Germans.

She was going to graduate from nurse's training. She had come here to live in a city where people danced to the big bands and wore furs like women on the covers of magazines. But most of all, she'd come to be a nurse, the best nurse Chicago had ever seen.

Helen Eberhart had known since she was nine years old what she'd do with her life. It had been a drizzly fall day when she'd hurried home after school, as usual, to do her chores.

"Look out, Gypsy!" Her brother Eugene rammed her from behind, nearly knocking her off her feet. They were both small for their age, but he was two years older, wiry and tough.

"*You* look out!" She didn't mind being called Gypsy, not anymore. She'd never really believed her brothers when they told her gypsies left her on their doorstep when she was a baby.

"Race you home!" Eugene shouted, passing her on the left.

Helen hiked up her skirt and ran, following Eugene through the Weinigers' lawn, over the flower beds, and up the street to home. But her brother the athlete pulled farther and farther ahead.

She was breathing hard by the time she reached home and spotted Eugene in the garden, standing by the roses. "Guess I win!" she shouted, heading for the back door, the official end of every race.

Eugene didn't move. Helen thought he was shivering, but that was dumb. It was stove-hot outside. She called to him, but he didn't answer.

"What's the matter with you?" She plodded back to the garden, braced for one of his tricks. "Eugene? Why are you standing—?"

And that's when she saw her mother. Ma was lying on the ground, one leg twisted under her, her hand still wrapped around cut roses. A dark pool spread around her, a growing red puddle shaping the dirt beneath her legs. From one leg, bright-red blood spurted like a fountain being shut off and on.

"Ma!" Helen dropped to her knees and held her mother's head in her lap. Mom's lips moved, but nothing came out. Her mother's kind brown eyes twitched. There was too much white in them.

Helen shouted, "Call Dr. Roberts!" Eugene didn't move. His cheeks were wet from crying. "Eugene, go call the doctor!"

He dropped to his knees.

Helen set down her mother's head and barked orders at her brother. "You wait with her, hear?" She didn't stick around for an answer but tore into the house, up half a flight of stairs to the kitchen. She cranked the phone on the wall and screamed into it, "Get me Dr. Roberts! Fast!"

"Lo?" came Doc's slow, deep voice. "Dr. Roberts here."

"Dr. Roberts, this is Helen Eberhart. You have to come. Quick!"

"Which one is it? What's the matter?"

"It's Ma, Doc! She's bleeding. Her leg. She's in the garden and—"

"You listen to me now, Helen. I'm coming right over. Can you see the wound still bleeding?"

"It's spurting up. There's so much blood." She wouldn't cry. She couldn't cry.

"It's her veins. And we need to stop that bleeding before I get there. Is Ed home? Or the twins?"

"There's just me." She couldn't count on Eugene.

"All right then," he said, like he'd just then decided something. "You'll have to do. I want you to get a dime and take it to where that blood's spurting."

Helen knew he wanted her to say something. But her heart was pounding too hard in her ears.

"Helen, can you do this? I know you won't like the blood, honey."

"It's not that. Where am I going to find a dime?"

"You find it. That's all. I need you to press a dime to your mother's leg where it's bleeding. A penny won't do. Too thick. You get a dime, and you press it hard. Now go!"

She heard the phone click and dropped the receiver. It slapped against the wall.

A dime. A dime? You didn't find change in this house. Not under

cushions. Not sitting on tables. *Dear Gott im Himmel, where on earth am I going to—?*

Then she remembered. The jingle in her dad's coat pocket, his Sunday coat. She could almost hear it, like the angels in heaven ringing their bells.

Helen tore into her parents' room, where she was only allowed when it was her turn to dust. There was the coat hanging over the back of the door. She had to stand on tiptoes to reach the pocket. *Please, God!*

She felt something. "Got it!" She drew out three pennies and a dime. Clutching the dime in her scrawny fingers, she raced back to the garden. "I'm coming, Ma!" She slid to the ground, tearing her stockings on the rosebush. The blood. How could there be so much blood in one leg? The red fountain continued to spurt. Helen took the dime and forced it through the blood onto her mother's leg. The coin slid against the red-drenched skin, but she pushed it hard, thumb on top of thumb. Blood oozed around the sides of the coin. Then it stopped.

"Ma, you're going to be okay," she whispered. "You're not bleeding now. Dr. Roberts is on his way."

Her mother twitched. Her dress was blood-soaked. Ma only had two dresses: this one and the one for Sundays. Her eyes rolled back, and her lips fluttered like moth wings. Helen imagined prayers coming from those lips, secret pleas and exchanges with God that her mother would never reveal.

Helen's fingers pushed hard against the dime. Blood and sweat made the coin slippery, but she kept it over the hole. She pressed so hard that her fingers began to ache. Her mother's red hair had come unpinned, and strands, redder still from the blood, clung to her cheek. Helen wanted to cradle Ma's head in her lap, to smooth the hair off her face, the way Ma had done for her when she had the fever.

But she couldn't let go of the dime.

"Eugene, help me hold this on her leg. I can't do it any longer."

Eugene didn't move. He stayed kneeling in the dirt, his fists rammed to his mouth.

Furious, Helen started to scream at him. Then she saw his eyes, wide with a terror that made his whole body shake. She took a deep breath, filled with the scent of roses, peonies, mums . . . and blood. "She'll be okay, Eugene. I promise, Genie. She will."

Her brother crept closer, then stopped. "I can't do it," he whispered.

And he couldn't. She knew that the same way she'd known that dime would be in Dad's coat pocket. The same way she knew she *could* keep the pressure on as long as she had to. "It's okay. Go out to the road and flag down Doc Roberts."

He took off at a run. Helen pressed on the dime, not letting it slip a hair to either side. The hole wasn't bleeding anymore, but she wasn't about to stop. Helen loved her mother, and Ma loved her. She knew that without it ever being said. She also knew that every one of the kids believed their mother loved him or her best.

What kind of talent, or love, was it that made everybody think you loved them best?

Helen's thumbs went numb. Her nose itched. Her hands and arms ached. How long could it take for Doc to drive a mile and a half?

Finally, she heard the old Ford crawl up and Eugene scream, "He's here, Helen! Doc! This way! She's in the garden." Doc and Eugene both came running.

Dr. Roberts squatted next to Helen, and still she was afraid to stop pressing down on the dime. "It's okay," he said. "You can let go now."

She looked up at him. His hat was crooked. Sweat stained his shirt under his arms. "Are you sure?"

He placed his big, rough hands over hers, then tugged her fingers away from the wound. "See there? You stopped that bleeding all on your own, girl."

It was true. Nothing came out of the pinprick hole in the large purple vein of the leg. Helen pulled down her mother's dress and straightened her apron. "Will she be all right?"

Ma groaned and said something Helen couldn't make out.

"I'm here, Mary." Doc lifted Ma's head and fingered one eyelid open, then the other. "You lie still now. Let me bandage that leg. We're going to have to do something about those varicose veins of yours. I warned you this could happen. One prick, one bump, and that vein could open again." He unbuckled his bag, took out a roll of bandages, and began wrapping the leg with the skill of Ma sewing school clothes.

By the time Doc had the leg wrapped, Ma was struggling to get up. "Thank you, Dr. Roberts. I'm fine now." Her voice sounded pinched, words squeezed through a hole. "Who found me?"

Helen felt the doctor's hand on her head. "Your Helen found you, and it's a good thing she did. You'd have bled to death if it hadn't been for little Helen here."

"Eugene and I both found you." Helen tossed her brother a grin.

"Well, I hope I didn't give you a scare," Ma said.

"I'll tell you this, Mary. You've got a nurse here. I couldn't have stopped that bleeding any better myself." He squatted down to Helen's level. "Miss Helen, I'm going to make you a promise. I'll do everything I can to get you into nurse's training after high school."

Helen felt heat rise to her face. Except for Dr. Roberts and their teachers, of course, she didn't know anybody who'd gone to school past high school. She frowned up at him, unwilling to be teased. "Really, Dr. Roberts?"

"Really."

It was all the good Helen would ever need, hearing that. But there was more.

"Helen Marie Eberhart," Dr. Roberts said, helping her to her feet, "someday you'll go off to the best nurse's training in the country. Then you can come back here and be my nurse. How's that sound?"

Helen smiled. "It sounds good." Half of Doc's prophecy sounded better than good. She would become a nurse, the best nurse she could possibly be. But she wasn't coming back to Cissna Park,

Illinois. There was a whole world out there, and she was going to be part of it.

Now, as Helen stood outside hospital room 301 and straightened her uniform, repinning her nurse's cap, she doubled the promise she'd made herself almost a dozen years ago. She was going to be a nurse. And she was going to see whatever there was to see in the world.

Maybe Eugene was right. Maybe she was a gypsy after all.



*John Roberts, MD
Cissna Park, Illinois
20 December 1941*

Dear Helen . . . or shall I say "Nurse Eberhart"?

I received your letter of 10 December and thank you kindly for taking the time to write it. I understand better than most, I believe, the arduous schedule and the dearth of free time imposed upon a young woman in pursuit of her nursing degree, which I have no doubt you will achieve with honors.

Allow me to express my heartfelt agreement with your decision to complete your training. Do not permit that heinous Japanese emperor the victory of thwarting your plans to become a nurse. Did you hear that Harold Messner was killed in that terrible act of aggression in the Harbor? They say his ship was sunk with hundreds of boys drowned or burned. You probably knew Harold, Clive's oldest. He dropped out of school and enlisted in the Navy last spring. I delivered that boy on the Messners' kitchen table. His mother suffers heart palpitations, and I fear the depth of that poor woman's grief.

I spoke with your own dear mother on Sunday following church. Your father was there, though not very talkative and

rather eager to be off home. Mary's worry over her boys shows in her countenance. Your brother Ed signed up the minute those bombs dropped in the Pacific. Left his tractor in the field and walked into town to enlist. Mrs. Messner said she saw him storming past their place on his way to the recruiting office, fist raised like he was looking for a fight. It's a wonder they took him with those eyes of his, but he says he's going to be an MP. I know your father would have preferred to keep his eldest down on the farm. But I can see Ed as military police, with his strong farm arms, can't you?

As for the twins, your mother reports that Wilbur enlisted, but Walter was turned down for his epilepsy. Your mother says it has hit him hard, but something tells me that brother of yours will find a way to serve his country. I've always liked the twins, even though they gave me a time at delivery.

Eugene is pressing to sign up, but your father will soon be in a wheelchair, and someone needs to farm. Eugene isn't Louis's first choice, but he has ruled that Eugene will farm, though sons no longer listen to fathers as they did in my day.

Take care, my little Nurse Helen.

*Respectfully,
Dr. John Roberts, MD*



*30 December 1941
Helen Eberhart
Evanston, IL*

Dear Eugene,

Don't you dare! Do you hear me? Don't you dare enlist, you knucklehead! Do I have to come down there myself and shake some sense into that thick head of yours?

Believe me, I get it. Dad can be . . . well, so Dad. He's a hard man, and I'm sure he's taking his frustration out on you. But you can't leave Mom. And you can't sign up to shoot people, Genie. Besides, with Clarence and Bud gone to the Pacific, Dad can't get along without you, although he'd never admit it under torture.

Which reminds me . . . has Dad honestly been telling people that the Eberharts are not German, but German-Swiss? Is there really an "uneasiness" in Cissna Park about being German? That's goofy! One glance through our small phone book from the Ackermans and Baumgartners, to the Kaufmans and Kruegers, all the way to the Weinigers and Zieglers, should assure everyone that we're all in the same boat when it comes to proving whose side we're on. What does Dad think will happen? Is he afraid they'll round up American citizens just because their ancestors lived in Germany or Japan? That may be Hitler's game, but surely it's not ours.

Nurse Benchley said she's thinking about enlisting in the Army as a nurse. Can you imagine that? If she does, she says she'll try to get me on as head nurse to take her place on the floor, if I've gotten my degree by then. I don't know if she really means it, but it's a nice thing to say. And she doesn't say that many nice things.

Eugene, think about Mom. Promise? She has enough to worry about with four sons in the war. If you leave, it will kill her. She needs you home. We all do. In some way I can't explain, I need you home in Cissna.

*Love,
Nurse Eberhart*



FRANK

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

DEC. 7, 1941

Frank Daley checked the chart at the foot of the old man's hospital bed. Admiral Ralph Jacobs was the unlucky age of Frank's dad, old enough to have caught action in the Great War, but young enough to still be in service for this whatever-it-was in Europe. That's where the good admiral had picked up the nasty infection that had landed him here, in the disease ward of the Washington University hospital. Frank liked the fellow well enough, but it was hard to look the old codger in the face without laughing. The French were the ones people called "frogs," but if any man ever deserved the name, it was this one, with his big, wrinkly eyes and sagging jowls that got lost in his bulbous neck.

Admiral Jacobs cleared his throat and struggled to sit up in bed. “Are you sure you’re a doctor? I’ve got boots older than you.”

“I noticed that when they brought you in, Admiral. Can’t the Navy afford new boots for its admirals? What do lowly sailors do? Go barefoot?”

The admiral sputtered. Then his frog eyes lit up, and he almost chuckled.

Frank whipped out a wooden tongue depressor and told the admiral to open wide. “I’m a lowly intern, sir. If it makes you feel any better, *my* shoes are older than *you*.” He removed the tongue depressor and made a mental note of the swollen tonsils.

“Intern?” Admiral Jacobs scoffed. “Don’t know why they can’t get a real doctor in here instead of some kind of want-to-be doctor.”

“More like a *going-to-be* doctor.” Frank had three firm offers for residency, all from great hospitals, and three more from hospitals with great locations, like Miami. He loved the beach and thought that one day he might set up private practice in a city with gorgeous beaches.

“Hmmpf. What’s your name, son?”

Frank had given the man his name at least eight times in three days. He wondered if the old chap forgot locations and battle plans that quickly. “Frank R. Daley, soon to be known as Dr. Daley or F. R. Daley, MD.”

“The armed services can always use an almost-doctor. You ever picture yourself enlisting?”

“Only in my nightmares, sir.”

“You’ve got some lip on you.”

“So they say.” Frank took out the pen his sister, Dotty, had given him before he started med school and scribbled notes on Admiral Jacobs’s chart: *Swollen tonsils. High blood pressure. Persistent fever. Forgetfulness.* The man wouldn’t be leaving anytime soon.

“Pencils not good enough for you?” Jacobs snapped, pointing to the chart with the pencil dangling from a string.

“I like pens.”

“What if you make a mistake?”

“I don’t make mistakes.”

The admiral laughed, a croaking that ended in a cough.

Frank waited for the cough to ease. “You okay, sir?” He slipped the stethoscope from his neck to his ears and held the silver plate to the old man’s back. There was enough fluid in his lungs to launch a small ship.

“Fool question,” the man muttered. “Of course I’m not okay. Not with my ship dry-docked in Boston and my crew on leave. You boys in white better get me out of here and back—”

He was interrupted by the hospital’s loudspeaker. It crackled like it was on fire, then howled as if burned. Frank almost welcomed the interruption, which was usually a page for a surgeon or a general call for duty nurses to report to OR or ER.

“Attention, please. Could I have your attention?”

That was a new one. Frank recognized the voice of the chief of hospital staff, Dr. Macy. Old Mace never *asked* for attention; he demanded it.

“There’s . . . there has been an enemy attack on our forces. President Roosevelt reported that the Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor. They’re saying it was a surprise air attack. There were multiple explosions . . . and fatalities.”

Voices clashed in the background, coming through the speaker system like thunder rumbling and lightning striking. Then Dr. Macy came back on.

“I guess . . . I mean, we’re hearing that our forces in the Pacific are under bombardment even now, as we speak. We don’t know what else is happening. Please carry on with your duties. We will keep you advised. And . . . and God bless America.”

Admiral Jacobs threw off his blanket before Frank could stop him. “Those sneaking, motherless . . . I have to get out of here! I need to get to my ship.”

“Admiral, get back in bed.” Frank had to forcibly hold the man

down until he quit fighting. “Sir, you’re not going to help anybody until we get you well.” The admiral was a lot stronger than he looked. Or maybe Frank was as weak all over as he was in his knees. He had to steady himself against the bed rail. His mind wouldn’t stop spinning. It made him dizzy, and all he wanted to do was run out of the room and call home.

“They don’t know who they’re messing with.” The admiral coughed, then wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. “They’re in for a surprise themselves. We’ve got fleets in the Pacific, just waiting for those Japs to do something like this. They’re going to be sorry they ever—”

“Sir?” Frank couldn’t wait another second. “My sister’s in the Philippines.”

“What’s she doing there?” Jacobs demanded.

“She’s a nurse. Dotty joined the Army Nurse Corps in ’38. Last June she took an assignment to the Philippines.” Frank stared at the admiral, barely seeing him. “She loves it there, taking care of malaria patients, going to after-duty dances. She met a guy a couple of months ago, a lieutenant.” His throat felt tight. Dotty, his *big* sister, was barely five feet tall, too small to be in the thick of . . . whatever this was. “What’s going to happen to her?”

“Now, son, don’t you worry. The Philippines aren’t in Hawaii.” He pronounced it *Ha-why-ya*. “Not even close to Pearl Harbor.”

Frank could feel his heart slow down. The sounds around him came into focus—shouts from the hall, the clatter of a meal tray, a scratching from somebody’s radio. Ordinary sounds. Normal sounds.

Jacobs smiled, and the frog lines disappeared. He looked like somebody’s kindly grandfather, the one everybody would get to dress up like Santa Claus at Christmas. “Don’t you worry. This whole mess will all be over in a couple of weeks. Three weeks at the most. That’s how long it should take our Navy to get to Japan and kick them across their own country and all the way to kingdom come. We’ll show ’em not to mess with our boys. You’ll see.”

Frank wanted to believe him. And why not? He was an admiral in the United States Navy.

“Son, trust me. Three weeks, and this show will be over. Now, get me out of here.”



18 December 1941

To: Lt. Dorothea Daley APO Philippines

From: Frank Daley

Dear Dotty,

Sis, what have you gotten yourself into now? I know you wanted to travel, but this is ridiculous. A week ago, all we heard in the papers was how we'd beat back the Japanese and the whole thing would be over in nothing flat.

Dad said you couldn't get newspapers on the island, but I'm sure you've heard we've declared war on Germany and Italy, too. That Miss Rankin from Montana was the only dissenting vote in Congress when FDR got the declaration of war against Japan. What is wrong with that woman?

With the draft like it is, every intern and resident I know has signed up for deferment, which means I'll get to complete my residency as long as I agree to show up for basic the day after I finish. Fine with me. I can't imagine the world will keep fighting that long. Even Jack and I can't keep fighting that long.

You remember my buddy Anderson? I brought him home for Thanksgiving right before you set out for the Philippines. He gets the New York Times, and they're saying we've checked the Japanese on land and have sunk three of their ships. I guess we're chasing Japanese warships all over the Pacific while our fighter pilots are doing what we pay them for. So that sounds pretty good, if you ask me. (Nobody is asking me, strangely enough.)

Talked to Jack this morning. He was very mysterious about where he was calling from, but it sounded far away. I'm telling you, our brother is a spy, or my name's not Frank the Great. His sources tell him the Japs dropped bombs on Clark Field, where your "Boots" is. Hopefully you've seen Boots or heard from him by now. Let us know, will you? We're awfully worried about this guy we've never met.

You know how I told you I didn't pray much? I'm rethinking that one.

*Stay safe, Dotty,
Frank*



23 December 1941

Not that far from Manila

From: Lt. Dorothea Daley

Dear Frank,

I don't know if you'll ever get this letter. No post offices in the jungle. Sometimes I give a letter to a soldier, or leave one with a patient.

Merry Christmas. Things aren't good here, but could be worse. Two of our nurses at Camp Hat were captured, and five in Guam.

I can't describe how surprised we were when we heard the bombs fall here at Fort Stotsenburg. The night before, we'd all been dancing. I got to the hospital early and was there when the first wave of bombs hit. It felt like an earthquake. I had no idea bombs could feel like that—not just a big boom, but a violent shaking of everything.

I stayed on duty with a few other nurses for 48 hours—no sleep and no food. I never did get back to the dorm. Our little

200-bed hospital got 500 patients from Clark Field almost instantly. When the first casualties arrived, I kept asking about Boots. I lifted every sheet, unzipped every body bag. He wasn't there, thank God.

When we ran out of space in the hospital, the tropical disease patients, all on their own, walked out to go fight. Bernie and I were the last two to leave our post. I only left because I fell asleep standing over an open wound and nearly put my head in some soldier's chest. I guess it's time to go when that happens. We couldn't return to the barracks, and we didn't want to get far from the hospital, so we crawled into a space in the airway under the hospital and took turns catching a little shut-eye. We barely fit, one lying down, one sitting up. I always knew being this small would come in handy.

I pray Boots is all right. Haven't heard from him in 11 days. I love him, little brother. I should have told him when I had the chance. I'm going to marry that guy the next chance I get. Maybe we'll meet up in Bataan. MacArthur ordered us to leave Manila for the peninsula so we can man the emergency hospitals. Unfortunately, Mac wasn't exactly specific on how we're supposed to get there.

*Be good,
Dotty*



29 April 1942

From: Lt. Dorothea Daley Engel

Dear Frank,

This whole island has been under attack since Jan. The commander of the Philippine forces, Wainwright, rode through on his horse and ordered us nurses to evacuate or be Japanese prisoners. Then he and the soldiers left by boat.

We did what we could for our patients, carrying and dragging them on stretchers made of branches. None of us is strong anymore, but we hauled as many as we could deep into the jungle with us. The ambulatory patients helped. We've been hiding out here for weeks, with nothing but rice and an occasional drop of meat "of undetermined origin." We told Franny, who does most of the cooking, not to tell us where our cute pet monkeys have gone.

Boots showed up, thank God (and I mean that!). He made it through the first three attacks by the skin of his teeth—powder burns on his uniform to prove it. He comes and goes (mostly goes, fights, comes back). He asked me if I'd gotten to meet General Wainwright. I told him, "No, but we ate his horse." True story.

I am now Mrs. Emanuel Engel, wife of "Boots." On Feb. 19, 1942, Father Cummings pronounced us husband and wife. We started the ceremony in our makeshift hospital and ended the service in a foxhole, when somebody over-celebrated, I guess, and dropped bombs so close the dirt in the foxhole covered my bridal khakis. Good thing I wasn't wearing a wedding dress.

After a wonderful six-hour honeymoon (which you're too young to hear about), the groom returned to duty at the beach defenses in Mariveles. I hardly ever saw him until he showed up in the hospital with malaria. Then we saw each other for a week straight. What kind of a war is this when your husband getting malaria is good news?

I'll bet Daddy expected MacArthur to rescue us, and I admit we did too. But "Dugout Doug" left a month ago. Guess he figured that captain-going-down-with-his-ship scenario doesn't play well in the jungle.

April has been the worst. I haven't seen Boots for weeks. And now they're saying he must have been with the 75,000 Filipino

and American soldiers captured at Mariveles on April 9. The Japs haven't got a prison large enough here, so they're making the soldiers march the length of the Bataan peninsula to prison camps. A boy who escaped by playing dead is full of stories about Japanese soldiers making ours march day and night without sleep or food or water. He said prisoners who collapsed were run over by jeeps. He claims he saw stabbings, beheadings, throats cut, soldiers shot as a game.

I think he's making it up. I pray he is. My Boots is tough. He'll be okay.

I'm glad you're praying. I've been ordered, along with eight other nurses, to stand ready for evacuation. After dark, a PT boat is supposed to take us out into the ocean. It's eerily quiet today, a Japanese holiday. We're to catch a PBY aircraft, even though we know the last PBY out caught the reefs, and the nurses barely made it back to land, where they were captured by Japanese forces and put in prisons.

That's not what worries me. That's not why I don't want to go. My husband is officially listed as missing in action. But I know better. Boots is still here.

Wish you were here. Not really. Stay in med school.

*Love,
Dot*

